

# News

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## **Consumer Price Index for Cincinnati-Hamilton, OH-KY-IN Second Half 1999 Semiannual Averages and 1999 Annual Averages**

Consumer prices in the Cincinnati metropolitan area increased 2.0 percent during the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 1999, the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics announced today. This compares with a 1.0 percent gain noted during the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 1998. The Cincinnati-Hamilton Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) for the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 1999 was 160.8 (1982-84=100). On an average annual basis, the all items index increased 2.6 percent in 1999, slightly higher than the 2.0 percent annual average change registered in 1998.

Two-thirds of the increase during the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 1999 were attributed to higher housing and transportation costs, according to Peter J. Hebein, Regional Commissioner for the Bureau in Chicago. An additional one-fifth of the increase was due to higher prices in the components for food and beverages and other goods and services. Price gains were also noted in apparel, medical care, recreation, and education and communication. Energy costs jumped 11.5 percent in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half 1999. Mr. Hebein noted that if the effects of volatile energy prices were removed, the overall index would have only increased 1.2 percent.

The housing component increased 1.6 percent during the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 1999. Higher costs for shelter and fuels and other utilities were responsible for this gain. The shelter index increased 1.1 percent. The fuels and utilities index jumped 7.0 percent as electricity and utility natural gas service costs rose 6.8 percent and 9.4 percent, respectively. Housing costs rose 2.1 percent in 1999, down from a 3.3 percent increase in 1998.

A 19.5 percent increase in gasoline costs led to a 3.4 percent increase in the transportation component in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half. During the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 1998, gasoline prices dropped 5.1 percent, then increased 1.7 percent during the 1<sup>st</sup> half of 1999. The annual average price increase for gasoline in 1999 was 8.6 percent. Overall transportation costs increased 3.1 percent on an average annual basis in 1999. This compares with a 0.7 percent average annual decline recorded in 1998.

The food and beverages component rose 0.9 percent during the 2<sup>nd</sup> half 1999. The cost of groceries (food at home) advanced 0.9 percent, while the cost of dining out (food away from home) increased 0.7 percent. The alcoholic beverages index declined 0.1 percent. The overall food and beverages component increased 2.4 percent in 1999 on an average annual basis. This is about the same as the 2.3 percent rise noted in the 1998 annual average.

Apparel costs during the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 1999 increased 1.6 percent, resulting in a 0.9 percent 1999 average annual increase. This annual increase compares with a 2.8 average annual percent decline recorded in 1998.

Medical care prices advanced 2.2 percent during the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 1999. On an average annual basis for 1999, medical care costs were up 3.8 percent, up from a 1.5 percent increase posted in 1998.

A 0.2 percent increase was noted in the price of recreation during the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 1999. However, the average annual change declined 0.1 percent as prices were lower in the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the year.

The cost of education and communication edged up 1.0 percent during the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 1999, but were up only 0.2 percent on an average annual percent basis.

The component for other goods and services rose 5.2 percent during the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 1999. The 1999 average annual change for this component jumped 12.8 percent. This compares to an average annual 5.2 percent increase recorded in 1998.

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#### CPI HOTLINE SERVICE PROVIDES LATEST INDEXES 24 HOURS A DAY

The all items CPI-U and CPI-W for the U. S. City Average and for the Cincinnati area are available to the public 24 hours a day, 7 days a week through the Bureau's CPI HOTLINE service. This recorded message also provides percent change from the prior period and from a year earlier as well as the scheduled release date for the next CPI issuance. The HOTLINE number in Cincinnati is (513) 684-2349.

#### BLS FAX-ON-DEMAND SERVICE OFFERS CPI DATA 24 HOURS A DAY

If you have a fax machine and a touch-tone telephone, you can order current and historical CPI data and receive it within minutes by fax. The BLS Fax-on-Demand service offers over 280 documents containing the most popular BLS data including more than 65 documents containing CPI data for the nation, four regions, and 30 metropolitan areas. To receive by fax a catalog of documents available on the service, call 312 353-1880, select menu option 1, and when prompted, order document 1000.

### BRIEF EXPLANATION OF THE CPI

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is a measure of the average change in prices over time in a fixed market basket of goods and services. The Bureau of Labor Statistics publishes CPI's for two population groups: (1) a CPI for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) which covers approximately 80 percent of the total population and (2) a CPI for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) which covers 32 percent of the total population. The CPI-U includes, in addition to wage earners and clerical workers, groups such as professional, managerial, and technical workers, the self-employed, short-term workers, the unemployed, and retirees and others not in the labor force.

The CPI is based on prices of food, clothing, shelter, and fuels, transportation fares, charges for doctors' and dentists' services, drugs, and the other goods and services that people buy for day-to-day living. Prices are collected in 85 urban areas across the country from about 57,000 housing units and approximately 19,000 retail establishments--department stores, supermarkets, hospitals, filling stations, and other types of stores and service establishments. All taxes directly associated with the purchase and use of items are included in the index. Prices of food, fuels and a few other items are obtained every month in all 85 locations. Prices of most other commodities and services are collected every month in the five largest geographic areas and every other month in other areas. Prices of most goods and services are obtained by personal visits of the Bureau's trained representatives. Mail questionnaires are used to obtain utility rates, some fuel prices, and certain other items.

In calculating the index, price changes for the various items in each location are averaged together with weights which represent their importance in the spending of the appropriate population group. Local data are then combined to obtain a U.S. city average. Separate indexes are also published by size of city, by region of the country, for cross-classifications of regions and population-size classes, and for 27 local areas. Area indexes do not measure differences in the level of prices among cities, they only measure the average change in prices for each area since the base period.

The index measures price change from a designated reference date- 1982-84- which equals 100.0. An increase of 16.5 percent, for example, is shown as 116.5. This change can also be expressed in dollars as follows: The price of a base period "market basket" of goods and services in the CPI has risen from \$10 in 1982-84 to \$11.65.

For further details see BLS Handbook of Methods, Bulletin 2490, Chapter 17, April 1997, and "The Consumer Price Index.

**Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes for semiannual averages and percent changes for selected periods**

**Cincinnati-Hamilton, OH-KY-IN** (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted)

Item and Group	Semiannual average indexes		Percent change to 2nd half 1999 from—	
	1st half 1999	2nd half 1999	2nd half 1998	1st half 1999
<b>Expenditure category</b>				
All items .....	157.7	160.8	3.1	2.0
All items (1967=100) .....	488.1	497.4	-	-
Food and beverages .....	151.3	152.7	2.3	.9
Food .....	149.6	151.1	2.3	1.0
Food at home .....	148.8	150.1	3.1	.9
Food away from home .....	153.1	154.1	1.9	.7
Alcoholic beverages .....	168.2	168.1	1.4	-.1
Housing .....	151.9	154.4	2.1	1.6
Shelter .....	173.5	175.4	3.1	1.1
Rent of primary residence .....	167.3	169.5	3.1	1.3
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence <sup>1</sup> .....	175.1	177.1	3.0	1.1
Fuels and utilities .....	122.0	130.6	1.0	7.0
Fuels .....	110.6	118.5	2.0	7.1
Gas (piped) and electricity .....	117.2	125.4	1.5	7.0
Electricity .....	122.3	130.6	1.5	6.8
Utility natural gas service .....	103.3	113.0	1.4	9.4
Household furnishings and operations .....	123.3	120.4	-3.1	-2.4
Apparel .....	129.1	131.2	3.2	1.6
Transportation .....	138.6	143.3	4.4	3.4
Private transportation .....	138.0	142.7	4.6	3.4
Motor fuel .....	101.2	121.0	21.6	19.6
Gasoline (all types) .....	100.9	120.6	21.6	19.5
Gasoline, unleaded regular <sup>2</sup> .....	102.5	123.5	22.3	20.5
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade <sup>2 3</sup> .....	102.7	121.7	21.1	18.5
Gasoline, unleaded premium <sup>2</sup> .....	94.2	110.2	19.4	17.0
Medical care .....	230.4	235.5	4.3	2.2
Recreation <sup>4</sup> .....	105.4	105.6	.2	.2
Education and communication <sup>4</sup> .....	99.1	100.1	.7	1.0
Other goods and services .....	270.9	285.1	14.9	5.2
<b>Commodity and service group</b>				
All items .....	157.7	160.8	3.1	2.0
Commodities .....	139.8	141.8	2.8	1.4
Commodities less food and beverages .....	132.6	134.9	3.1	1.7
Nondurables less food and beverages .....	131.8	137.9	8.7	4.6
Durables .....	135.2	133.6	-2.4	-1.2
Services .....	177.9	182.0	3.4	2.3
<b>Special aggregate indexes</b>				
All items less medical care .....	153.7	156.6	3.0	1.9
All items less shelter .....	153.1	156.5	3.1	2.2
Commodities less food .....	134.0	136.3	3.1	1.7
Nondurables .....	142.0	145.8	5.3	2.7
Nondurables less food .....	134.2	140.0	8.2	4.3
Services less rent of shelter <sup>1</sup> .....	187.2	193.1	3.4	3.2
Services less medical care services .....	172.6	176.4	3.2	2.2
Energy .....	107.7	120.1	8.6	11.5
All items less energy .....	165.2	167.1	2.8	1.2
All items less food and energy .....	169.1	171.2	2.8	1.2

<sup>1</sup> Index is on a November 1982=100 base.

<sup>2</sup> Special index based on a substantially smaller sample.

<sup>3</sup> Indexes on a December 1993=100 base.

<sup>4</sup> Indexes on a December 1997=100 base.

- Data not available.